

Carl Kaupp #25  
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Q: Mr. Kaupp, when did you first join the Navy?

A: I joined the Navy the 18th of May in 1938.

Q: What guided your choice to join the Navy as opposed to, say, the Army?

A: Well, I signed up for the Marine Corps and the Navy, but at that time they were only taking twelve out of the New York district, and the Navy called me before the Marine Corps, and that's how I happened to get in the Navy.

Q: What was the first ship you were assigned to?

A: It was the USS *Hull*.

Q: Where did you join her?

A: In San Diego, in March of 1939.

Q: When did you sail to Hawaii?

A: We sailed to Hawaii in 1939 with a Hawaiian Detachment.

Q: So, were you stationed in Hawaii before the main body of the fleet got out there?

A: We proceeded the Main fleet. We were known as part of the Hawaiian Detachment.

Q: What was the ship's operating schedule like in those days, when you first went out to Hawaii?

A: Well, we would operate for a week or two weeks, and have maneuvers and do tactics, and then come back in, you know, for a weekend, or what have you. Or if we spent a number of weeks at sea, we would come in and then go alongside the tender for maintenance, or just swing around the buoy if it was our turn to.

Q: And what would you normally do on time off that you had...liberty?

A: Well, I spent a lot of time on the ship. I was the gunners mate and when I did go ashore I generally went around the area, toured the Islands. I did a lot of shells; picked up shells on the beaches. I went to another machine gun school out at one of the Army bases and it was located along the shore. And as I say, I was not a great shore man. I spent a good deal of my time and I

did a good deal of time studying.

Q: What was the duty to which you were normally assigned on the ship?

A: I was a gunners mate. I went aboard the ship as a 2nd Class Seaman. After having attended ordinance school, I was honor man in this ordinance school, and sent to this destroyer for sea duty. I had number two gun on the ship and then I was transferred to number three gun, where I had a 5-inch .38 gun, and a loading machine that was my responsibility to maintain.

Q: Was that your assignment on Dec. 7th?

A: That was my assignment on Dec. 7th, yes.

Q: What did you do the night before the attack? Do you recall?

A: I had duty so I was aboard and my duty was as the Officer, not the Officer of the day, but I had the day watch; supervised the day watch with the seamen as an escort.

Q: What were doing when the attack opened?

A: When the attack opened, I had just finished washing my clothes, and I was taking a shower, intending to go to church on the beach.

Q: What was the first sight or sound that alerted you to the fact that there was something out of the ordinary that was happening?

A: Explosions. When I was taking my shower, as I said, and I heard these explosions, and just wondering what had happened. So I looked out at the porthole, or to the entrance rather, where we came in the hatch, and I saw these fires on the airbase, on Ford Island. And I just assumed that someone was loading aircraft with gasoline and they exploded. And then I heard a "Tat-tat-tat-tat-tat" and I don't mean to be profane, but somebody hollered, "Flaming assholes!" And I put on my shorts and went to my gun station.

Q: Did the rest of the gun crew assemble there too?

A: The rest of the... it was a liberty weekend, as I said earlier, and so the entire ship was not aboard. Some, most of the men were and everyone went to their station. I was not able to fire my weapon because of the transverse and of its location. So I went down to help them on gun five, cut the canvas down. We had a canvas over the back end of the gun.

Q: Gun five was a ...?

A: Was a 5-inch .38. We had a canvas over the gun deck to shade the area where the men would go back, you know, to sit and relax.

So we chopped that down, and then leaving there, then I went up and manned the .50 caliber machine gun by the bridge; up forward of the bridge.

Q: Was this a water cooled machine gun?

A: It was a water-cooled .50 caliber Browning machine gun, yes.

Q: How many men would normally be on a crew for that kind of gun?

A: Generally, three men. You'd have your gunner, and an attendant, and then a man to get your ammunition.

Q: How many were you working with?

A: We were working with three or four men at that time, because we had just...I sent my men around to help other people where they were needed.

Q: Did you have an adequate supply of ammunition there?

A: Yes we did. We would go to sea, if I may say, each week and maintain gun watches. We'd stand a gun watch on two weapons, on number two gun and number four gun and when we'd come in on the weekend, we'd put our ammunition down in the magazines and then secure our gun watches. But we did maintain gun watches while we were at sea... like a stand by.

Q: How soon after you got to that machine gun did you open fire on Japanese planes.

A: Well, I would say, as soon as ... the machine gun had been manned by a seaman and then I relieved the seaman and took over as gunner. But it was, I would say, within a matter of possibly 5 minutes, or maybe 7 minutes, that we got ammunition up to the ready lockers and that we were able to commence firing.

Q: Did you score any hits on any of the planes?

A: I am not going to say that I scored hits. I had traces going in that area and with everyone firing I assume that we all, you know, contributed toward the... In fact, I was told to stop shooting because I was shooting over the *Dobbin* and then the guy wires, and the Admiral says, "Leave him alone, he's doing a good job."

Q: Was the Admiral on the *Dobbin*?

A: The Admiral was on the *Dobbin*, yes sir.

Q: How close were the planes to the *Hull*?

A: Oh goodness, I would say they weren't more than possibly 300 feet to 400 feet, because they swung around making the run over

the Island. And I'd say they were possibly the same amount of distance, probably 400 yards to 500 yards away, some of them. Some of them were higher and some were at a greater distance depending upon when they veered from their attack.

Q: Were any of the other anti-aircraft weapons on your ship also firing.

A: Some of the 5-inch had fired and we had three machine guns that could fire; the fourth couldn't because we were inboard ship against the USS *Dobbin* which was a tender.

Q: What about any of the guns on the Dobbin or any of the other nearby destroyers?

A: That I can't answer for, but on the other ships, yes, they were all firing. We were four destroyers and our squadron leader in the nest, and we were firing over one another, you know, we'd fire over and you'd kind of knock the men from their gun positions and they would do the same to us when they'd swing around and fire their 5-inch; a hazardous operation really.

Q: Sounds like cutting it pretty close in some of this.

A: Yes, we did cut it pretty close. It's a wonder we didn't shoot one another.

Q: You mentioned that you had tracers in your gun. Do you remember what the count was, how many tracers per round of ball?

A: I really don't. I think we had two or three ball, and armor piercing, and incendiary, and tracer, but I really can't relate to how many there were. But it gave you a good field to follow, a tracer to follow; you had a good stream to follow right out to where you were.

Q: So, how long did you man that machine gun?

A: Well, I manned it until they secured from the general quarters situation and then we finally went to sea and got on our gun watches and stood gun watches all the while. But we went out around 11:30 I believe, or sometime in that area. We picked up some survivors on the way out, incidently; men that were in the water, men that were in whale boats that had been picked up, and brought them aboard our ship.

Q: What sort of shape were they in?

A: They were wet and they were shaky, and every one was crying.

Q: Did you join a task force out at sea?

A: Yes we did. We had a group. Our destroyer was manned by the captain of the *Farragut* I believe, because our captain had to be ashore. And he came aboard and took command of our ship under

orders from whoever CINCPAC was and our Hawaiian detachment was. And he took the *Hull* to sea and we came in the next day and then our group came aboard our ship.

Q: And so do you remember how long you were out at sea roughly?

A: I think we came in the following afternoon. I'm sure that's about what we did. We joined up with the *Enterprise*, I believe, at night. In fact, we were under a torpedo run, but then we found out it was the *Enterprise*. We thought we had come across some of the enemy, but it was our own ships that were coming into Pearl.

Q: What one thing, or several things, are most vivid in your memory about the Pearl Harbor attack?

A: Oh, I think, just realizing what had happened. It uh..... I get emotional..... I'm sorry.

Q: It's alright.

A: Just to see the extent of the damage... and what had happened, and realizing really, the full extent of what had gone on. And when we would go to sea, incidently, and have maneuvers and what, no matter where we went, there were always Japanese sampans around. I don't give a damn if we steamed two days or three days. We'd have a maneuver; you do some bit of an operation, and there always a sampan there, everywhere. We used to have to ride the fleet, the red fleet, and the regular fleet, and one would go north and one would go south, and darn, every time we came together, boy, they'd be right out there. I don't know how they ever knew where we were. But then reading, if I may say, there were a couple of books that I read later, "Ramparts of the Pacific" and "Pacific Charter" by Hamlet Aiken(?), was a correspondent with the New York Times. And you realize some of the things that he said in there, you know, they allowed more Japanese Buddha priests to come to the Island, and yet the Shinto religion, you know, was on the decline. And all these people turned out, not all of them but a number of them turned out to be either officers in the Army or the Navy, or part of the 5th column of spy work that they had set up on the Islands.

Q: What was the feeling of you and the other men on your ship about local Japanese at the time?

A: Everyone was very pleasant and they were nice to get along with. I never had any trouble anywhere I went. They were just to me, surprising, that this would happen, and you know, we had no indication. We knew that something was imminent because of the War in Europe and it just was a total shock to everyone, you know. We kind of felt, some of them, that they were let down. You know, you read these things later on; you don't believe everything that you read, but a lot of facts have come out and it was just a horrendous thing.

Q: In the wake of the attack, in the days after the attack, what was the general atmosphere among the men in the fleet in terms of morale and speculation?

A: Morale couldn't have been higher. The morale couldn't have been higher, really. Everyone just wanted to go and knock the tar out of them. We didn't care really, about time at sea, or how long it took, or what the outcome would be. We knew that we had a job to do, and everyone did it. Really, there was no dissention, or no quabbling. Of course, this was an entirely different situation that we had later on, as you know.

Q: How about rumors that were going around. Were there a lot of rumors?

A: No, no rumor. That I can't relate to, no sir. I don't know of any rumors or what have you. But I know that everyone that came aboard, or that we brought... we had some men that were survivors off some of the battleships, and they were just as eager to stay right on the ship than to go. And we did maintain and keep some of them. Some of them went back to help clean up their own problem that they had. But really, the morale and the spirit couldn't have been higher.

Q: Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

A: No. I loved the Navy. I thought it was great. I left the *Hull*, incidently, and went to school in Washington D.C. They have a gun factory, and I was top man in the class, and they took me out of the 5-inch and put me in the 8-inch, and I had an 8<sup>a</sup>inch turret on the *Boston* (number two turret). And I was commissioned on the *Boston*, the *Kwajalein*. I went from 1st Class Gunners Mate to Ensign, and then left the *Boston* after my commission, a short while later, and I had the 1st Division on the USS *Savannah*. And we spent our time in the Med and we escorted Roosevelt on his trip to Yalta, through the Med. And then we also escorted Truman when he went to Potsdam. But I finished my Navy career in 1946. I was a Lt.(jg.) and then I resigned my commission and I went in the Marine Corps.

Q: Oh, did you?

A: I was in the Marine Reserve for awhile and then I was an ordinance officer with a fighter squadron. I trained pilots in California and down in El Centro, and then I was discharged in '51.

Q: Sounds like an interesting career, a lot of variety there.

A: I lost a brother, if I may say so. He was on the USS *Jacob Jones*. It was a destroyer that was sunk off the coast of New Jersey, when they'd come back from convoying ships to Europe. But he followed me into the Navy six months later.

Q: I guess a lot people don't realize how close to U.S. shores

some of that action was.

A: That's right, they were on the coast. I had another brother, incidently, in the Marine Corps. He was with the 3rd Marine Division and he spent over a year and half in the hospital from Iwo. But he's doing well. He's fine and no problems.

Q: Good.

A: So, that's the extent of our service.

Q: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Kaupp.

A: I thank you kindly. It was nice to be selected.